

Preparing a realistic budget

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Start with personnel

- Determine % effort/time that you will spend on this project.
- Determine the number, qualifications and % effort for other personnel needed
 - Technicians
 - Postdoctoral Fellows
 - Graduate Students
 - Undergraduate Students

- There are no magic numbers regarding the qualifications and/or number of individuals needed for each aim.
- Be realistic on what each individual can accomplish and how long will it take.
- Then follow Murphy's law and add some.

Consider the supplies needed for the personnel involved

- For a project that uses modern tools of cell and molecular biology it is reasonable to estimate a supply budget of ~\$15,000/year for each FTE involved.
- This number will vary, however, depending on the nature of the research proposed.

Do you need new equipment?

- Most startup packages include funds that can be used to equip your new lab.
- If you need additional equipment, however, this is the time to consider it.
- Most equipment is bought on the first year of the grant.
- The older and more established you get, the harder it is to get equipment money from study sections.

Travel funds

- Many study sections have a set idea on how much money should be allocated to travel.
- This amount is usually small (\$2,000-4,000/year) because they expect you to obtain these funds from other sources.

Other funds

- This category includes funds needed for things such as publication costs and equipment maintenance.
- You can readily estimate these expenses realistically.

Add it all up

- Calculate your first year budget.
- Calculate the budget for subsequent years taking into account salary increases and changes in funds requested for equipment.

Modular budgets

- Add all yearly budgets up and divide the total by the number of years requested.
- Round the calculated yearly budget up to the nearest module based on \$25,000/module.
- Calculate indirect costs for each year and total indirect costs.
- Hope for the best.

Non-modular budgets

- Calculate indirect costs for each year and total indirect costs.
- Write the budget justification section.
- Hope for the best.